

**George Washington to Robert Howe, August 21, 1779,  
The Writings of George Washington from the Original  
Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799. John C. Fitzpatrick,  
Editor.**

**\*To MAJOR GENERAL ROBERT HOWE**

Westpoint, August 21, 1779.

Dear Sir: In my Letter of yesterday I observe that through the assistance of—<sup>1</sup> and his agents, and other Channels, you might obtain accurate knowledge of the position of the enemy without Kings-bridge. I am still of the same opinion; but under the idea I entertain of—<sup>2</sup> do not conceive it would be expedient in you to drop the smallest hint by which he could discover the tendency of these inquiries, much more the time and manner of execution, if these should be the result of them. considering him as a double character, it is more than possible he would give some intimation by which the project would be ruined, if otherwise it bid fair for success. Nor would it be in his power to deny to the enemy (who probably would charge him with it) his having any knowledge of the transaction if he really should have had previous intimation of it.

I am now led, though persuaded it is unnecessary, to caution you against a surprize yourself; the enemy will feel themselves much hurt at the repeated instances of disgrace, their arms have lately met with; and will most assuredly attempt to bury it in some stroke of retaliation on such parts of the Army as is most accessible, than which none is more so than that under your commd., because every preparation for it can be concealed, and the Troops are on the spot ready to operate at a moments warning, I could not therefore

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restrain my pen on this head, though I am persuaded you will do every thing that Military prudence can dictate to guard against it. With sincere esteem etc.

11jah Hunter.